

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 AID-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04
H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01
SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SSM-03 CAB-02 COME-00 DOTE-00
EB-07 EPG-02 FAA-00 OMB-01 /089 W
-----190415Z 062455 /16

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4069
INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 2385

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: LE PFOR US EAIR OVIP
SUBJ: CONVERSATION WITH FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS -- VANCE VISIT,
PAN AM'S RETURN AND CHRISTIAN ATTITUDES

1. DURING CALL ON FONMIN BOUTROS ON MAY 17 TO DISCUSS FAHD VISIT (SEPTEL), HE ALSO RAISED A NUMBER OF OTHER SUBJECTS:
2. SECRETARY VANCE'S MIDDLE EAST TRIP. BOUTROS ASKED IF SECRETARY VANCE WERE PLANNING ANOTHER TRIP TO THE MIDDLE EAST. I REPLIED THAT THIS APPEARED LIKELY AND IN RESPONSE TO HIS QUESTION ON TIMING SAID THAT LATE JULY NOW SEEMED MOST LIKELY DATE. BOUTROS SAID THAT HE HOPED VERY MUCH THAT THE SECRETARY WOULD AGAIN VISIT LEBANON. BOUTROS POINTED OUT THAT FROM MANY POINTS OF VIEW LEBANON WAS ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL CONFRONTATION STATES SINCE THE BATTLE WAS BEING FOUGHT ON ITS TERRITORY. A VISIT BY THE SECRETARY WOULD THEREFORE BE APPROPRIATE AND WOULD HELP TO STRENGTHEN PRESIDENT SARKIS.
3. PAN AM'S RETURN. BOUTROS ALSO ASKED IF PAN AM HAD ANY PLANS TO RESUME FLIGHTS TO BEIRUT. I REPLIED THAT WE HAD JUST RECEIVED A TELEGRAM (STATE 111998) INDICATING THAT THEY HAD NO PLANS TO DO SO AT THIS TIME. WHEN
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BOUTROS ASKED ME WHY NOT, I REPLIED THAT, SPEAKING STRICTLY PERSONALLY, I THOUGHT THERE WERE PROBABLY THREE FACTORS INVOLVED IN PAN AM'S DECISION:

- A. SINCE SUSPENDING FLIGHTS TO BEIRUT LAST YEAR, PAN AM HAD MADE ARRANGEMENTS TO RE-ROUTE MANY OF ITS FLIGHTS THROUGH OTHER CITIES AND THESE COULD NOT EASILY BE CHANGED;

B. A NEW USG-GOL CIVIL AIR AGREEMENT HAD NOT YET BEEN NEGOTIATED AND PAN AM MIGHT BE RELUCTANT TO CONSIDER RESUMING FLIGHTS UNTIL IT KNEW WHAT THE TERMS OF THIS AGREEMENT WOULD BE;

C. PAN AM STILL HAD SOME DOUBTS ABOUT THE SECURITY SITUATION AT BEIRUT AIRPORT.

BOUTROS NOTED THESE POINTS CAREFULLY AND INDICATED HE WOULD BE DISCUSSING THIS SUBJECT WITH THE APPROPRIATE GOL AUTHORITIES. (COMMENT: IT IS OBVIOUS FROM BOUTROS' COMMENTS AND THOSE OF PRESIDENT SARKIS TO THE AMBASSADOR -- BEIRUT 2227 -- THAT THE GOL ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO THIS SUBJECT.)

4. EMBASSY CONTACTS WITH CHRISTIAN LEADERS. BOUTROS ASKED IF WE HAD BEEN SEEING THE KFUR FRONT LEADERS. I REPLIED THAT WE HAD AND NAMED A NUMBER OF RECENT OCCASIONS ON WHICH EITHER THE AMBASSADOR OR I HAD MET WITH CHAMOUNS OR GEMAYELS. BOUTROS SAID THAT HE HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THEY WERE BEGINNING TO GET THE MESSAGE THAT THE USG SUPPORTED PRESIDENT SARKIS, DESPITE THE EFFORTS OF "CERTAIN PERSONS" WHO WERE STILL TRYING TO CONVINCE THE CHRISTIANS THAT THIS SUPPORT WAS WINDOW DRESSING. WE AGREED THAT THE CHRISTIANS TACTICS OF TALKING LOUDLY ABOUT ACTIONS THAT WOULD LEAD TO DE FACTO PARTITION WERE VERY UNWISE. ON OTHER HAND, BOUTROS SAID, HE COULD UNDERSTAND WHY CHRISTIANS WERE RELUCTANT TO TALK TO THE LEBANESE MUSLIMS. EVEN TODAY, CONFIDENTIAL

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BOUTROS SAID, THERE WAS NO SUNNI LEADER WHO HAD THE POTITICAL AND PHYSICAL COURAGE TO DECLARE IN PUBLIC THAT THE PALESTINIANS SHOULD SUBMIT THEMSELVES TO LEBANESE SOVEREIGNTY AND AGREE TO THE SARKIS INTERPRETATION OF THE CAIRO ACCORD. SAEB SALAM WOULD DO SO IN PRIVATE, BUT NOT IN PUBLIC BECAUSE HE FEARED THE REACTION FROM OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES AND HIS POLITICAL CONSTITUENCY. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES IT WAS EASY TO UNDERSTAND WHY THE CHRISTIANS FELT THEY MIGHT HAVE TO GO IT ALONE. I SAID THAT WE HAD REPEATEDLY TOLD THE CHRISTIANS THAT IN OUR VIEW THEIR BEST HOPE IN THE LONG RUN WAS TO SUPPORT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT SARKIS AND NOT TO TALK ABOUT SETTING UP A SEPARATE STATE. LANE

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Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 18-May-1977 12:00:00 am
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Disposition Action: RELEASED
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